

S P E C I F I C A T I O N

MEMORABILIA CARD

5 CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS:

This application is a continuation-in-part of Application
Serial No. 08/192,438, filed February 7, 1994, ^{now USPN 5,421,583,} which is a
continuation-in-part of Application Serial No. 08/147,139, filed
November 3, 1993, ^{now USPN 5,417,431} the disclosures of which are incorporated herein
by reference.

10 The present invention relates to memorabilia, and more
particularly to cards of the trading card type, such as baseball,
football, basketball, hockey, soccer, country singers, comic
15 characters and like trading cards and more particularly to a card
which incorporates a portion of an implement involved in an
historical event to provide a memorabilia card.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

20 Trading cards and similar vision effect articles are very
familiar in the sports and entertainment fields, and they are a
favorite of both youngsters and adults alike. Various forms of
trading cards have been developed and promoted over the years, and
each typically has on one side a reproduction of a photograph or
25 likeness of a famous figure or personality. Information about the

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famous figure, such as statistical and biographical information, frequently is provided on the other side of the card. Premium type cards have been developed in recent years using high quality lithography. Some cards are printed on glossy cardboard stock with
5 crisp color photographs of the player on the front and back. Although the cards usually are referred to as "trading" cards, they are today more frequently viewed as collectibles.

New forms of trading cards and other articles for providing enhanced visual effects are described in the above-identified applications.

In addition to trading cards, various devices or implements and pieces of clothing, such as baseballs, baseball
10 bats, footballs, basketballs, jerseys, shoes, musical instruments, etc., are marketed in conjunction with photographs, plaques, and the like, as memorabilia. Examples are autographed baseballs, footballs, and the like, as well as photographs and trading cards with an actual autograph and with some form of authentication in
20 the form of a serial number, hologram, or the like. In some cases the item (e.g., baseball, bat, football, etc.) is the one used for some particular memorable event (e.g., 40th home run, 100th touchdown pass, 1000th concert, etc.), and are retained by the famous figure involved or, alternatively, sold at a relatively high

price by that person or someone else. Unfortunately, the high price of such items places them outside of the ability of youngsters and average income families to purchase or otherwise obtain them.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The concept of the present invention is to provide an actual piece or portion of an item in combination with a photograph or the like of a famous figure having a relationship to the item. The item can be combined with a photograph, an image on a trading card, or with famous figure images such as those described in the above-identified co-pending applications, or the like.

In a particular exemplary embodiment of the concepts of the present invention, a memorabilia card is provided comprising a photograph or other printed image of a sports player such as a baseball player shown in an action image holding or swinging a bat, and wherein the bat of the memorabilia card comprises a miniature bat of an appropriate proportion to the person's image, and wherein the miniature bat has been formed using some material from the actual bat used by that person during a memorable event, such as for example, when he hit his 40th home run in a particular year. The photograph can be a photograph of the actual event memorialized, such as the 40th home run.

5 This is accomplished by retaining and purchasing the actual bat, then manufacturing a large number of tiny bats using material from the actual bat, and then gluing or otherwise adhering the tiny or miniature bat onto the picture over or in place of the bat in the action photograph. Additionally, the picture or its associated trading card, plaque or the like, can include an appropriate certification that the miniature bat contains material from the genuine bat used by that player during the memorable event (e.g., 40th home run).

10 The concepts of this invention are not limited to a sports item like a bat, but can include a miniature piece of any other item, such as a baseball, base, clothing (e.g., hat, shirt, shoes, etc.) and accessories such as sunglasses and bracelets, and
15 furthermore the concepts are applicable to any form of sport (including football, hockey, basketball, soccer, etc., and any of the items used in or by players in those sports (e.g., piece of a football, hockey stick, soccer ball, basketball, clothing, etc.)) or entertainment.

20 Accordingly, it is a principle object of the present invention to provide a new form of memorabilia item.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a memorabilia card memorializing a sporting or entertainment event and related item.

5 A further object of this invention is to provide a photograph or other image likeness of a famous figure, along with a miniature or tiny piece of an actual sports item or implement used by the famous figure during a particular event to be memorialized.

10 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

These and other objects and features of the present invention will become better understood through a consideration of the following description taken in conjunction with the drawing in which:

15 Fig. 1 is an elevational view of a memorabilia card according to the present invention;

20 Fig. 2 is a cross-section view thereof taken along a line 2-2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an elevational view similar to Fig. 1, but of a trading card with a three-dimensional effect of the nature shown and described in the above-identified co-pending applications; and

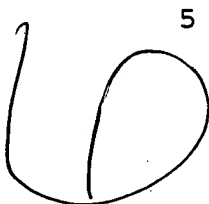
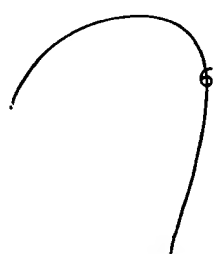
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Fig. 4 is a cross-sectional view of the card of Fig. 3 taken along a line 4-4 thereof.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

5 Turning now to the drawing, Figs. 1 and 2 show a first embodiment according to the present invention, and Figs. 3 and 4 illustrate a second embodiment. In the embodiment of Fig. 1, the same comprises essentially a photograph or an image formed by lithography or other photographic or printing method, and comprises a plainer sheet of material 10 as seen in Figs. 1 and 2 with a rendering 12 of an exemplary baseball player holding a bat 14. The image may further comprise a background image 22, as well as a border area 16a-d, along with a block or area 18 for the player's name and/or other information such as the particular event (e.g., 10 40th home run), and a block or area 20 which can comprise a printed certification as will be explained in further detail. According to the present invention, the bat 14 comprises an actual miniature bat formed from material from an actual real bat used by this particular player in the event being commemorated (e.g., 40th home run). The bat 14 may be in a tapered cylindrical form with the same proportions of a real bat or, alternatively, the face 14a may have that shape, whereas the rear side which is adjacent the image surface 10 may be flattened as at 14b. The bat 14 is secured to

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the card 10 preferably over the image of the bat held by the player 12.

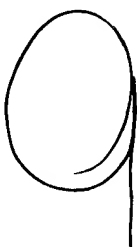
Thus, in the embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2, the image is essentially identical to any photograph, lithograph or other printed sheet or card, and much like conventional trading cards, except that it includes suitably adhered thereto a miniature bat 14, along with a certification 20 certifying the authenticity of that bat 14, being a portion of the actual bat used by that player at the event being memorialized. It may include a background 22.

Another embodiment is illustrated in Figs. 3 and 4 wherein the basic card 30 is made according to the concepts described in the above-noted co-pending patent applications, the disclosures of which are incorporated herein by reference. The card 30 comprises a base substrate 32 having a background image 34 and a foreground image of a player 36. The surface of the foreground picture of the player 36 is slightly spaced outwardly from the background picture area 34, and as described in said co-pending applications typically is about forty-thousandths of an inch and within the range of approximately ten to sixty-thousandths of an inch. Similarly, a frame comprising the sections 38a-d preferably also is raised or extends outwardly to help provide an enhanced realism picture, although it is not required that this

frame 38 so extend outwardly. Further, the embodiment of Figs. 3 and 4 can include a block or area 40 for the player's name, and a block or area 42 for a certificate like area 20 in Fig. 1.

5 Importantly, the embodiment of Figs. 3 and 4 also includes a bat 44 like the bat 14 of Figs. 1 and 2. That is, the bat 44 is a miniature bat formed from the actual bat used by the player at the memorable event, and the certificate 42 attests to that authenticity. As was the case with Figs. 1 and 2, the bat 44 can be in a cylindrical tapered form with proportions like a real bat, or the bottom side which adjoins the image area 34 can be flattened. In either case, the bat 44 is secured by a suitable adhesive to the substrate 30. The bat 44, as does the bat 14, provides a further enhanced realism as well as enhances the memorabilia value of the overall card.

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20 In the embodiment of Figs. 3 and 4, the substrate 30 can be extended to include a section 50 which, as best seen in Fig. 4, forms an "A" frame or stand in combination with the substrate 30. Preferably, there is a small die cut along top edge 52 which allows the substrate sections 30 and 50 to readily fold flat or be extended outwardly in the "A" fashion as seen in Fig. 4.



Although exemplary embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described in connection with a baseball player and a baseball bat, the concepts are applicable to all sports and other activities and items which may function as memorabilia as earlier noted. For example, the present concepts could be extended to use for personal and other photographs, wherein some items, such as a piece of wedding gown of a bride, is secured to a photograph of the person over or adjacent to the image of the item.

While embodiments of the present invention have been shown and described, various modifications may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention, and all such modifications and equivalents are intended to be covered.